Blackboard

Blackboard learn™

QuickStart Guide for Faculty

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Available Online at:
http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard

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Table of Contents

How to Use This Guide 4
Web Browser Requirements 4
Keeping It All Straight 5
Blackboard Overview 6
- Access Blackboard 7
- The My Blackboard Tab 8
- The Blackboard Course Menu 9
- Blackboard's Control Panel 10
- Make Your Course Available 10
- Add a Course Announcement 11
- Add Your Contact Information 13
  - Modify or Remove Your Contact Information 14
- Course Content Areas and the Course Menu 14
  - Add a New Content Area 14
  - Rearrange the Order of Course Menu Content Areas 15
  - Manage a Content Area 15
  - Remove a Content Area 15
- Add Documents to a Course Content Area 16
  - Add a File to a Course Content Area 17
- Enable and Manage Blackboard Tools 18
- Send a WSU Broadcast Message from Your Course 19
- Log Out of Blackboard 19
- Alternate Course Websites 20

Blackboard FAQs 21
Get More Blackboard Information and Help 22
Ideas for Best Practice 23

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How to Use This Guide

This QuickStart Guide is focused on Blackboard: a powerful Web-based learning and course management system in use at Wayne State University (WSU). The guide begins with a brief overview of Blackboard (Bb). The remainder of the guide provides illustrated instructions on how to access Blackboard and use basic Bb features and tools. It concludes with Bb Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and sections on where to get more information and help and Ideas for Best Practice.

You can use this guide in two ways:

- *If you already use Blackboard,* you can use this 2009 version to familiarize yourself with changes in the basic Blackboard features. You don't need to work through the entire guide, just go directly to the section you need.
- *If you are new to Blackboard,* the step-by-step illustrated instructions in this guide will lead you through several important procedures.

This QuickStart Guide is just enough to get you started with Blackboard. To go further, be sure to take advantage of many helpful resources online. The WSU Knowledgebase includes answers to frequent questions faculty and students ask about Blackboard. Online help is available directly inside Blackboard. Just click the **Help** icon (?) located in the green banner along the top of any Blackboard window for tips, tutorials, and quick access to a pdf version of both an *Instructor Manual* for you and *User Manual* for your students. These manuals also are available from within each Blackboard course.

Web Browser Requirements

WSU's online Blackboard tools work on both Windows and Mac platforms. To log in and use these online tools, you may use any of the Internet Web browsers listed below:

For Windows Computers
- Internet Explorer 7.0
- Mozilla Firefox 3.0

For Macintosh Computers*
- Safari 3.0
- Mozilla Firefox 3.0

***Special Note for Mac Users:** At this time, most but not all features are available to Mac users using the Safari 2.0 Web browser.

You can get more information on Web browsers (and lots of other software) supported by Computing & Information Technology, from the following Web site:

http://computing.wayne.edu/Help_Desk/software.php

Keeping It All Straight

Wayne State University offers many online support services and academic tools. Below is information faculty often need when using these tools and services.

The Blackboard Grade Center Does Not Record Official Grades

Remember that the grades in the Grade Center in Blackboard do not automatically become the students' official grades at Wayne State. You must enter final grades into WSU Pipeline at the end of each semester. Unfortunately, we don't have a way to do that automatically at this time — you must enter each student's grade individually.

> ***Tip:*** You can either print out a copy of your students' grades in each Blackboard course and work from that, or you can open two windows side-by-side on your computer screen, one with Blackboard grades and one with WSU Pipeline, where you enter final grades.

Important Information about Blackboard's E-mail Facility

The e-mail facility within Blackboard is not a full-fledged, stand-alone e-mail program.

When you send mail within Blackboard, the course ID is automatically appended to any text you manually enter on the subject line. Also note that your WSU AccessID e-mail address shows as the return address in the message.

Blackboard does not keep a copy of mail you send from a course, but you do receive a copy of the message in your WSU AccessID E-mail account (now called Wayne Connect).

Glossary

To access a Glossary of technology terms in the WSU Knowledgebase, click the **Glossary** link above (or enter the following Internet address in your browser:

http://kb.wayne.edu/index.php?glossary=i

If the Knowledgebase Glossary doesn't have the term you're looking for, check out the glossaries on these Websites:

University of California at Davis, Information & Educational Technology:

http://iet.ucdavis.edu/glossary.cfm

Matisse's Glossary of Internet Terms:

http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html

Blackboard

Overview

Blackboard site at Wayne State: http://blackboard.wayne.edu

Blackboard is an easy-to-use learning and course management system that will give your course a strong online presence that is easy to navigate. Blackboard was originally selected by Wayne State University faculty in 1999 because it does so much, yet requires little technical expertise. For these same reasons, it was chosen as the standard for Web course pages in WSU Pipeline beginning in Fall 2002.

Blackboard allows you to easily make your course syllabus available online, post announcements, and include contact information about yourself. You also can communicate with students via Blackboard's discussion list and virtual classroom tools. You can post assignments, create linked course modules and materials, and keep a secure gradebook online, so students can track their progress throughout a course. You can even administer exams through Blackboard.

This section provides step-by-step instructions for putting your course information online, organizing your materials, and making your course site available to students.

For more information on additional features available in Blackboard, visit:

Computing & Information Technology Blackboard Resources:
http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard

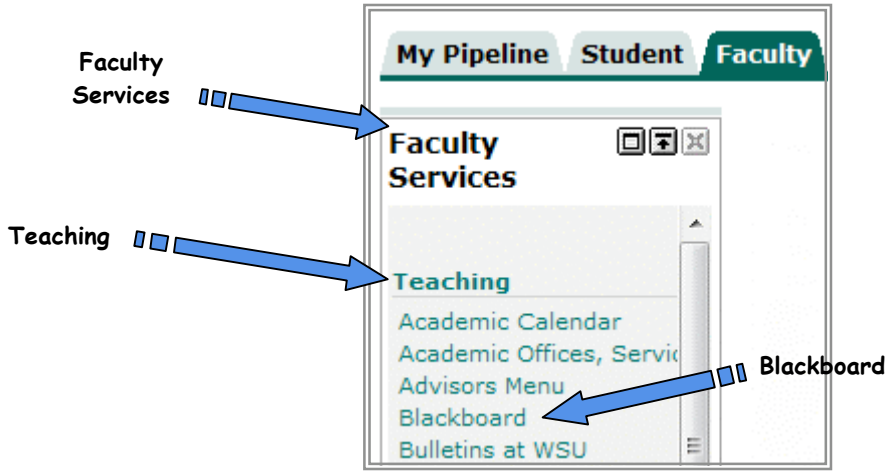
Office for Teaching and Learning Blackboard Resources:
http://www.otl.wayne.edu/support_blackboard.php

Access Blackboard

1. There are two ways to access Blackboard:
   A) through WSU Pipeline, or **B)** by logging in to the system directly:

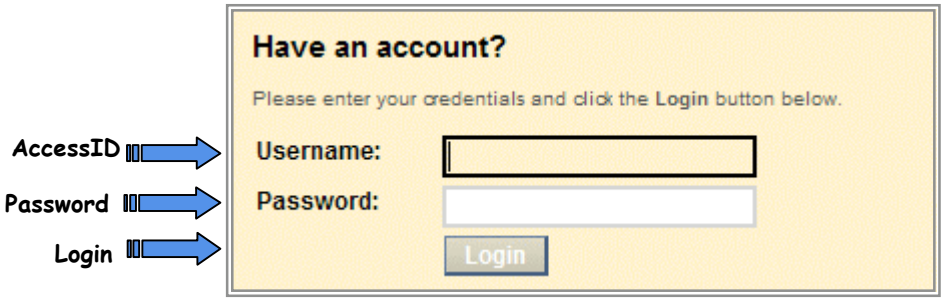
A) Access Blackboard through WSU Pipeline — *for quick access or short-term use:*

- Open a recommended browser and log in to Pipeline: http://pipeline.wayne.edu
- Click the **Faculty** tab.
- Under **Faculty Services** and **Teaching** in the left column, click the **Blackboard** link (see below).



B) Access Blackboard directly — *when you plan to be on the system for a while:*

- Open a recommended Web browser (see page 4) and go to the WSU Blackboard site: http://blackboard.wayne.edu
- Type your **AccessID** and **Password** in the Blackboard **Log in** area (as shown below) and then click the **Login** button.



2. You are directed to the **Welcome** tab on the **My Blackboard** tab.

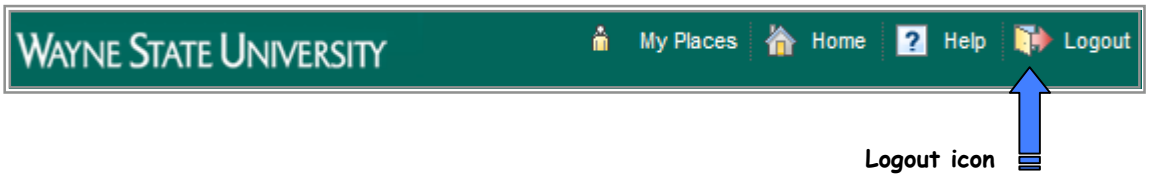
The My Blackboard Tab

After logging into Blackboard (Bb), you are automatically directed to the **Welcome** tab on the **My Blackboard** tab.

The **Welcome** tab displays quick links to your current courses, your course announcements, any Blackboard System announcements, and links to often-used tools and resources.

- For quick access to courses you are teaching or in which you are enrolled, click a link on the **My Courses** module.
- For a more detailed listing of your courses, click the **Course List** tab.
- To access the University Libraries' Website, click the **Library** tab at the top of the window.

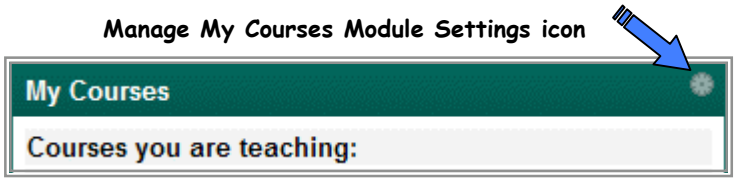
Notes: When you are finished using Blackboard, be sure to click the **Logout** icon located in the green banner along the top of any window, as shown below:



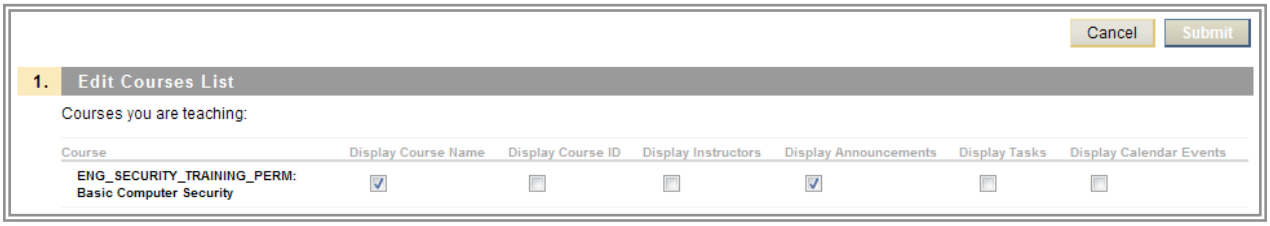
To get help using Blackboard: click the **Help** icon for C&IT Blackboard resources or use the searchable Instructor Manual on the Control Panel in every Blackboard course, under **Help**. You can always return to the Blackboard Welcome tab by clicking the **Home** icon.

Shorten the List of Course Sites Displayed on your My Blackboard tab

1. In the **My Courses** module on the My Blackboard tab, click the **gear** icon in the upper-right corner, as shown below:

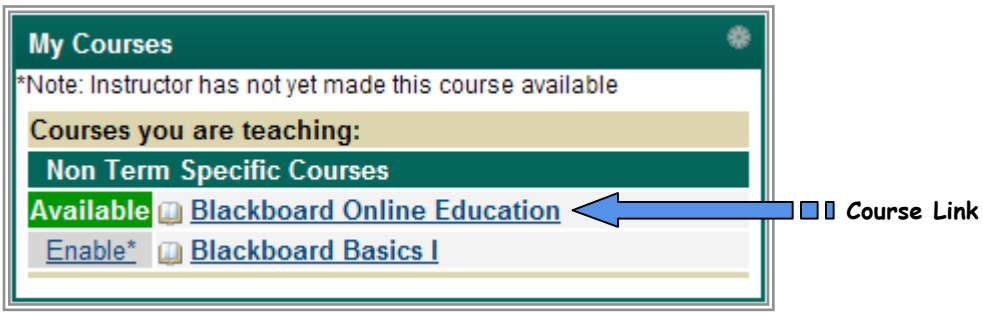


2. Remove check marks from those courses you **do not want to display** in your course list.
   - Click inside the check box to remove the check mark.



Access a Course Site

Once inside Blackboard, on the My Blackboard tab, you can access your Blackboard course sites in the **My Courses** module (see below). Look for the course and click the **Course Link**.



You also can access your courses by clicking the **Course List** tab on the My Blackboard tab.

Note: Wayne State University creates a Blackboard course site for every scheduled course, and you make it available to your students. It's up to you to populate the course site with information, files, and resources. You start to do this by developing **Course Menu Content Areas** that are located along the left side of each Blackboard course site. Blackboard allows you to customize the appearance and names of the Course Menu, as well as the content and tools available to your students.

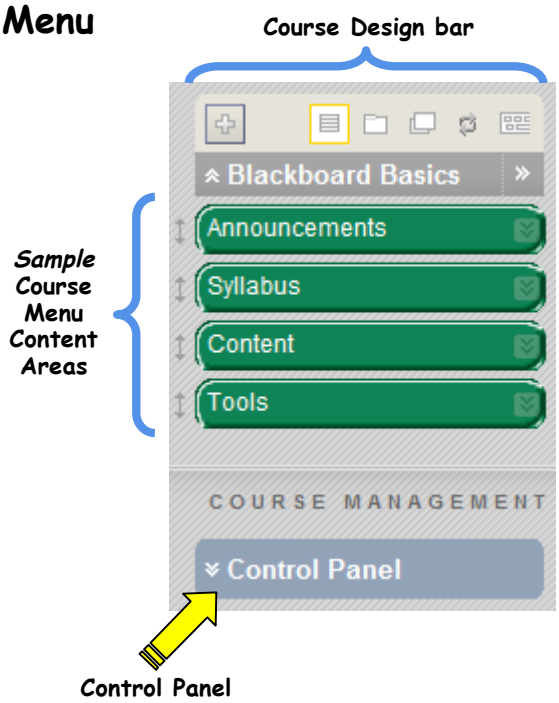
The Blackboard Course Menu

The **Blackboard Course Menu** can give your students access to the following:

- course announcements
- course syllabus
- course content
- course tools (e.g., online assignment grades — only their own!)

The **Blackboard Course Menu** area provides faculty with all student features *plus* access to the Course Design bar (at the top) and Control Panel (underneath). This is where you can begin developing your course site.

Note: Only the course instructor (and anyone with the appropriate privileges) can view or access the Course Design bar and the Control Panel.



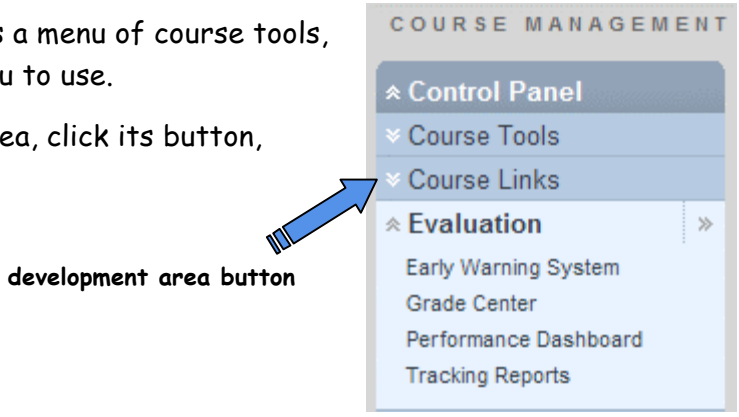
Blackboard's Control Panel

The Blackboard **Control Panel**, located under the Course Menu, contains buttons to six course tool development areas:

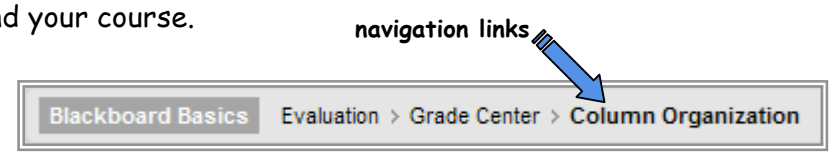
1. Course Tools
2. Course Links
3. Evaluation
4. Users and Groups
5. Customization
6. Packages and Utilities

Each of these development areas contains a menu of course tools, options, and management functions for you to use.

To expand the menu for a development area, click its button, with the double "v" icon.



You may use the navigation links at the top of the Blackboard tab to navigate through the Control Panel and your course.



Make Your Course Available

With initial course set up, your Blackboard course site is ***unavailable to students*** — until **you** make it available. Students cannot see your course site until you change this initial setting. However, your Blackboard course site is *always available to you for development*.

Set Course Availability

There are two ways to make your course available to students after logging in to Blackboard.

METHOD 1:

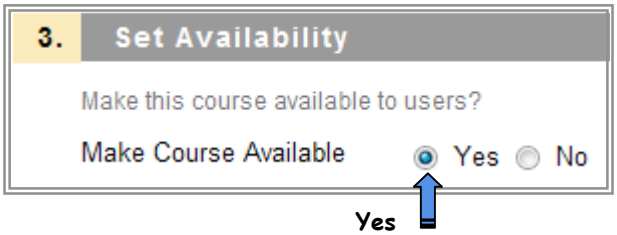
1. In the **My Courses** module on your My Blackboard tab, click the **Enable** link to the left of the course you wish to make available.
   - If you see an **Enable** link, it means your course is unavailable to your students.
2. On the **Properties** page that opens, locate the **Set Availability** section (3.) and click **Yes**. (See image on next page.)
3. Click **Submit**.

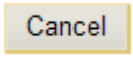
Or, if you change you mind, click **Cancel**.

Set Course Availability (cont.):

METHOD 2:

1. From within a Blackboard course, locate the **Control Panel** and click the **Customization** button. This expands the menu options.
2. Click **Properties**.
3. On the Properties page that opens, locate the **Set Availability** section (3.) and click **Yes**.
4. Click **Submit**.



- If you change your mind and want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. 

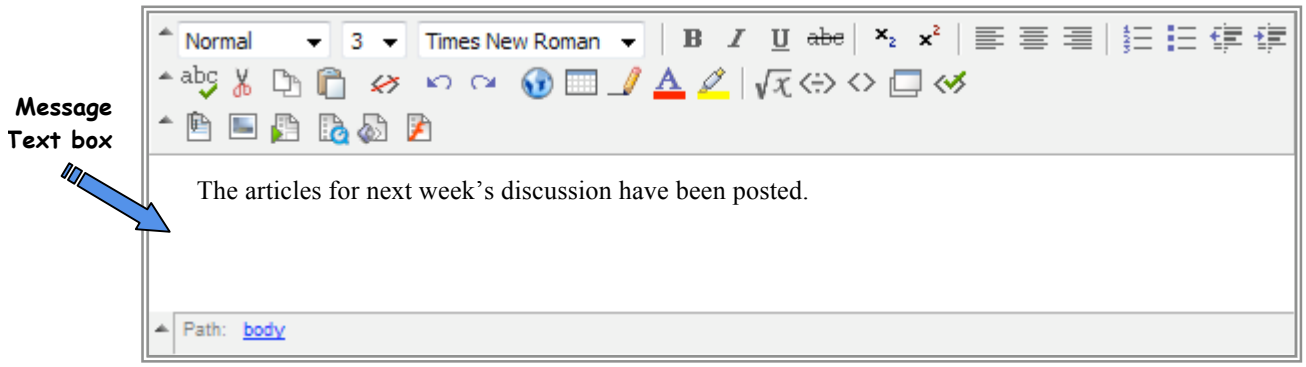
Students who are enrolled in your course can now access your Blackboard course site and all materials and resources you have made available to them. By default, any content areas that do not contain material will be hidden from the student's view.

Add a Course Announcement

Course Announcements are visible to you and your students from the **Announcements** (or entry) page for your Blackboard course, as well as from the Blackboard **Welcome** tab.

1. Under Control Panel, click the **Course Tools** button and the menu expands.
2. Click **Announcements**.
3. Click **Create Announcement**.

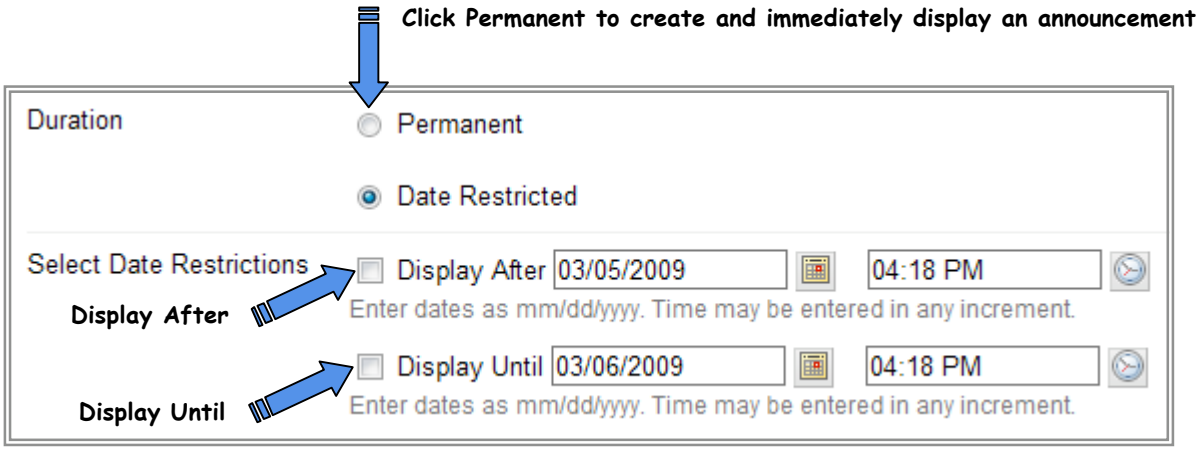
4. Enter the announcement subject in the **Subject** field. This is required and will be your announcement title.
5. Enter the announcement message in the **Message** Text box as shown below:



Note: The Visual Textbox Editor in Blackboard allows you to format the text in your course announcement. You may choose text style, font and size, color, and other text formatting options, as well as html formatting. You also can spell check your announcement, attach a file or image, and add MPEG/AVI, Quicktime, audio, or Flash/Shockwave Content.

Those on a Macintosh using Safari 2.0 or an earlier version will not have access to all features in the Visual Textbox Editor. Use Firefox on a Mac to access all the available features.

6. Select the **Duration Options** you would like for the announcement:
   - To hide the announcement, select the appropriate **Date Restrictions**. You can return and click **Permanent** or change the dates when you're ready to display the announcement.
   - To create and immediately display a permanent announcement, click **Permanent**; this type of announcement has no end date unless you enable the **Date Restricted** option.
   - Specify dates, if you wish, by enabling the **Date Restricted** option.
     a. Click the **Display After** checkbox and select a beginning date and time.
     b. Click the **Display Until** checkbox and select an ending date and time.



Note: Announcements with specified display dates are posted *for those durations only.* If a **Display Until** date is selected, the Announcement will not be viewable in the **View All** tab.

7. To send an e-mail of the announcement to all course users, you also can choose to enable the **Override User Notification Settings**.

8. Add a **Course Link** to a location in your course, if needed.

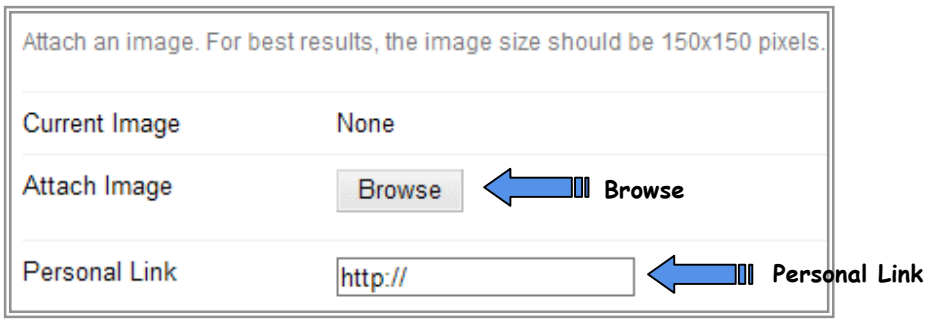
Note: If you'll be late to class or need to cancel at the last minute, you also can send a WSU Broadcast Message to students in your class. If they set their preferences to receive Broadcast Messages for your course via text message or IM, they will receive the information more quickly. For instructions on using the WSU Broadcast Messaging Service from Blackboard, see page 19 of this guide.

9. To finish, click **Submit**. Submit
   - Or, if you change your mind and want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. Cancel

Add Your Contact Information

1. Under the Blackboard **Control Panel**, click the **Course Tools** button and the menu expands.
2. In the Course Tools area, click **Contacts**.
3. Click the **Create Contact** button. Create Contact
4. Add your contact information in the corresponding fields.
5. To **make your profile available** to students, click the **Yes** button under Options.
6. To include a photo of yourself, click the **Browse** or **Choose File** button (depends on your browser) located to the right of **Attach Image**. Then browse through your hard drive to locate and select the photo file.

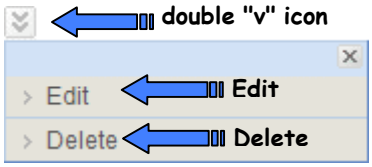
   Note: To avoid image distortion, the image size should be 150 x 150 pixels.



7. To include a link to a Website, enter the Web address/URL in the **Personal Link** field.
8. To finish, click **Submit** Submit
   - Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. Cancel

Modify or Remove Your Contact Information

1. Access the **Contacts** area:
   Under Control Panel > click Course Tools > click Contacts.
2. To change your contact information, click the **double "v"** icon. In the menu of options that drops down, select **Edit**.
3. To remove your contact information, click the **double "v"** icon, then select **Delete**.



Note: A warning pop-up box displays asking you to confirm your action, which cannot be undone.

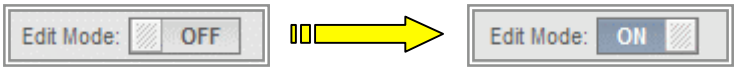
4. To finish, click **Submit**. Submit Or, if you want to quit, click **Cancel**. Cancel

Course Content Areas and the Course Menu

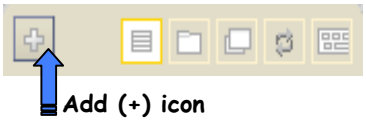
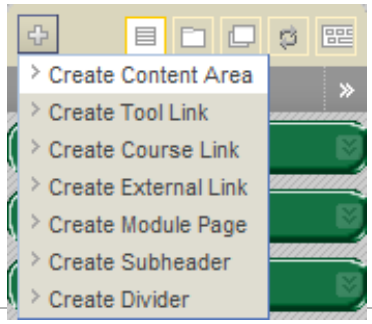
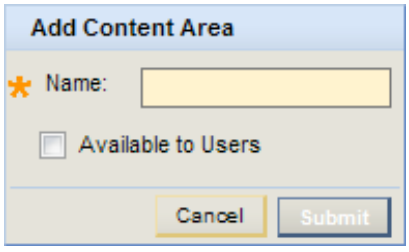
The ***Course Menu Content Areas*** (*see page 9* of this guide) are topical areas you can use to organize all your course material. Blackboard allows you to customize the appearance of the Course Menu and the availibility of content to users in each of your Blackboard courses: you can add, modify, or remove content areas. For example, you may add a content area for Assessments or change the name of the Assignments area to Homework.

Add a New Content Area

1. Set Edit Mode to **On**.



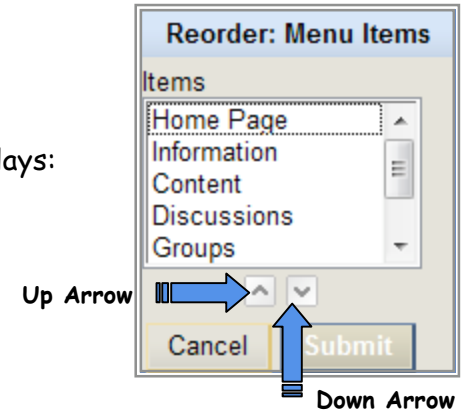
2. Locate the **Content Design** bar above the Course Menu Content area (see **a.** below).
3. On the **Content Design** bar:

a. Click the **Add (+)** icon.	b. In the dropdown menu, select **Create Content Area**.	c. In the **Name:** box, type a name. —18 characters or less is best.
		

The new content area displays as the last item on the course menu. To rearrange the order of the content area, see instructions on the next page.

4. To finish, click **Submit**. Submit Or, if you want to quit, click **Cancel**. Cancel

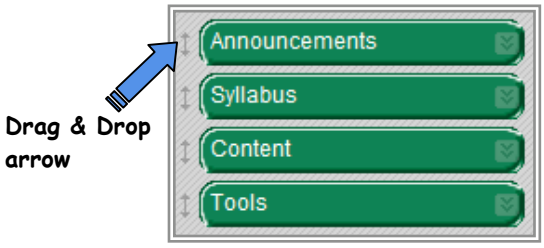
Rearrange the Order of Course Menu Content Areas



1. Click the **keyboard** icon on the far right of the Content Design bar. The **Reorder: Menu Items** box displays:
2. Select the Content Area that you want to move.
3. To reposition it, click the **Up Arrow** or **Down Arrow** and then click **Submit**.

OR

1. Click and hold the **Drag & Drop** arrow to the left of the Content Area button you want to reposition.
2. Drag it to the new location & release the mouse.

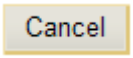


Manage a Content Area

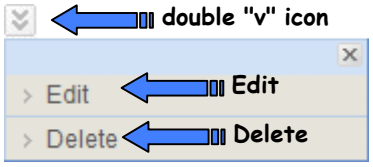
After creating your Content Areas, you can begin adding content. All content is added or edited within the Content Areas. All actions related to managing course content are available from the Content Area page. This includes:

- Edit the name of the Content Area or delete it.
- Create Item – add any single Content Item
- Build – add organizational elements such as folders, tools, and links
- Evaluate – add tests, surveys, and assignments
- Collaborate – add group and communication tools such as blogs, discussion boards, and chat sessions

1. On the Course Menu, click the **Content Area** button.
2. Make any necessary changes:
   - Edit the **Area Name**.
   - Make the Content Area **Available/Unavailable** to users. (See pages 10–11.)
3. To finish, click **Submit**.

   - Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. 

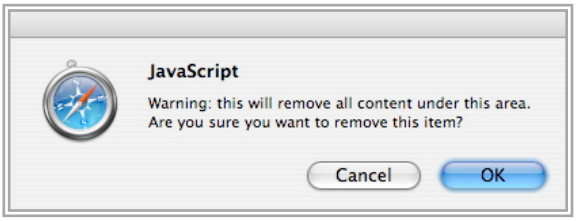
Remove a Content Area



1. Click the **double "v"** icon on the right of the button for the Content Area you wish to remove, and a menu drops down:
2. Select **Delete**.

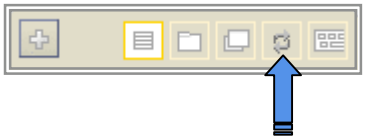
IMPORTANT NOTE: WHEN YOU REMOVE A CONTENT AREA, *ALL CONTENT ASSOCIATED WITH THAT AREA ALSO IS REMOVED.*

3. As a double-check on this irreversable action, a warning message may display, similar to that below:



   - If you really want to remove the content area and all content associated with that area, click **OK**.
   - If you do *not* want to remove the content area and all content associated with that area, click **Cancel**.

4. To view the change or make sure nothing was changed, return to your course Announcement (or entry) page and click the **Refresh** icon on the **Content Design** bar above the Course Menu area.



Add Documents to a Course Content Area

Blackboard allows you to add or link to files created in another application, such as Microsoft Word. This is an easy way to make your course syllabus, lecture outline, lab assignments, and so forth available to students.

Keep in mind the following points when creating your files for use in Blackboard:

- ✓ Save files in Rich Text Format (.rtf) or as Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) to ensure that any recent word-processing program or Adobe Reader can open them.
- ✓ Do NOT use a pound sign (#) in the file name.
  - **incorrect:** Syllabus#2_ FA1020 F02.rtf
  - **correct:** Syllabus_2_FA1020_F05.rtf *or* Syllabus2_FA1020_F05.rtf
- ✓ If you work on a Mac, include the file extension at the end of the file name.
  - **incorrect:** Syllabus_FA1020_F05
  - **correct:** Syllabus_FA1020_F05.rtf
- ✓ You ***must*** remove any copyright-protected materials you included in your Blackboard course site at the end of the semester.

Add a File to a Course Content Area

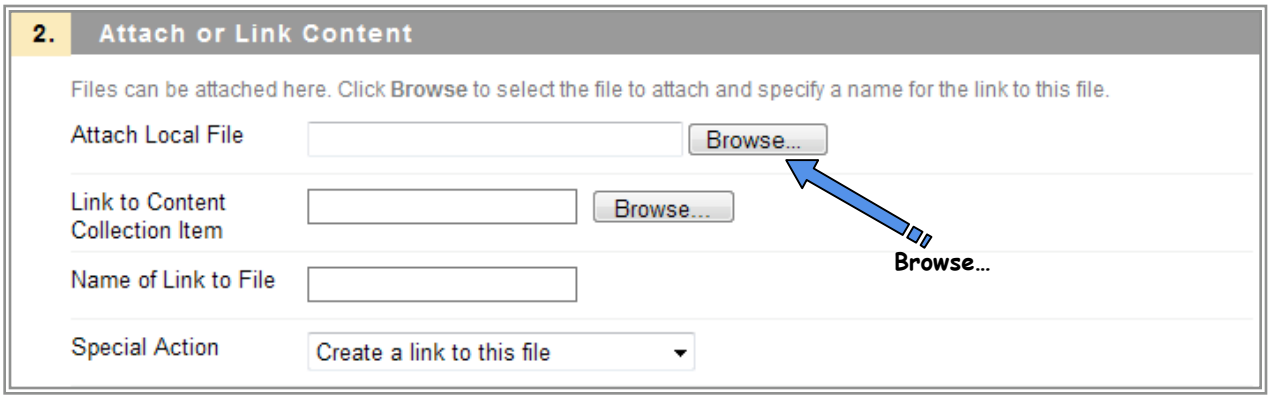
1. Once inside a Course Content area, click the **Create Item** button.

2. Type an item name in the **Name** field (e.g., ENG 1010 Syllabus).

3. Add a message in the **Text** box (optional).

4. Add a file as follows:

   a. Click the **Browse** or **Choose File** button to the right of **Attach Local File**, as shown below.


2. Attach or Link Content
Files can be attached here. Click Browse to select the file to attach and specify a name for the link to this file.
Attach Local File
Browse...
Link to Content Collection Item
Browse...
Name of Link to File
Special Action
Create a link to this file
Browse...

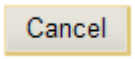
   b. Browse through your computer's hard drive to locate and select the file you want to add; you will see the filename in the **Attach Local file** field once it is attached.

   c. Type an identifying name in the **Name of Link to File** field.

   d. You need not change the **Special Action**.

5. Select the **Options** for availability, tracking views, and date/time restrictions, if desired.

6. To finish, click **Submit**.

   ➢ Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. 

Enable and Manage Blackboard Tools

You can make Blackboard tools available (visible) and unavailable (not visible) to both students and guests in your course.

1. Under **Control Panel** within your course, click the **Customization** button and the menu expands.
   Note: Observer access is *not functional* at this time.

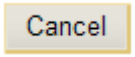
2. Click the **Tool Availability** button.
   Note: The initial set up of WSU Blackboard courses makes most tools available to students by default.

3. To make a Bb tool unavailable in your course, remove the check mark by clicking its check box in the **Available** column.

4. To make a Bb tool available to guests, check its box in the **Visible to Guests** column.

   Notes:
   *A **Guest** is someone not enrolled in the course who will be able to view the course. Some tools (e.g., the **Discussion Board**) are not available to guests, and this cannot be changed. A grey box replaces the check box in these instances.*

5. To finish, click **Submit**.

   - Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. 

Send a WSU Broadcast Message from Your Course

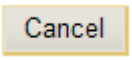
If you'll be late to class or need to cancel at the last minute, you can easily send a WSU Broadcast Message to students in your course. Students can choose to receive Broadcast Messages you send from your course via text message, Instant Messaging (IM), and/or WSU E-mail. If they register their cell phone information and select to receive text messages or IM, they will receive messages more quickly. However, if the student does not configure their Broadcast Message options, the default delivery method is WSU E-mail.

Tip: You may want to encourage your students to set preferences in the WSU Broadcast Messaging Service to receive text messages on their cell phones for your Blackboard course. They can access this service through WSU Pipeline, under **My Pipeline Links**. **Broadcast Messaging** is a link under **WSU Resources**.

To create and send a WSU Broadcast Message from your Bb course:

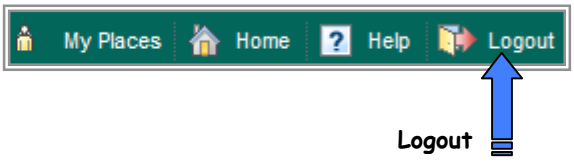
1. Under the **Control Panel** in your course, click **Course Tools** button and the menu expands.
2. Click **Send Broadcast Message**.
3. Define your message's **Subject** and **Body** in the named fields.

   Note: This messaging function is limited to 160 characters (including spaces) as that is the allowable length for SMS text messages. The Subject and Body fields both contribute to this limit. If you enter more than 160 characters, the text message will be truncated. Also note that your message will be distributed via the preferences selected by your students, that is, text message, IM, and/or WSU e-mail.
4. To finish and send your message, click **Submit**

and then **OK**.
   - Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button. 

Log Out of Blackboard

When you are finished working in Blackboard, click the **Logout** icon located in the green banner along the top of any Blackboard window:



Note: Blackboard contains confidential and personal information about your students. Therefore it is ***critical*** that you ***log out of Blackboard*** if you are working on a public computer (e.g., in a library or computer lab). Simply closing out of the browser window may not completely log you out, giving the next person complete access to your Bb course sites!!

Alternate Course Websites

Blackboard was chosen as the standard course page that would be made available through WSU Pipeline because it is easy to use. If you have your own Website on another Web server, however, you have a couple of options:

① You may link to your external Website from your Blackboard course. By doing so, you and your students may still take advantage of the broad suite of online learning tools available in Blackboard.

To add a link to your external Website from within Blackboard:

1. Log in to Blackboard at http://blackboard.wayne.edu and enter your Blackboard course site.
2. Click the **Content Area** where you'd like to place the external link (e.g., Course Documents, Course Information, External Links, etc.).
3. Click the **Build** menu button and then select **Create External Link**.
4. Type a name for the link in the **Name** textbox and your Website location/ address in the **URL** textbox.
5. To finish, click **Submit**.

➢ Or, if you want to quit, click the **Cancel** button.

② You may link to your external Website **from within WSU Pipeline**, so your students go directly to that Website.

To add a link to your external Website from within WSU Pipeline:

1. Log in to WSU Pipeline at http://pipeline.wayne.edu
2. Click the **Faculty** tab and, in the left column, under **Faculty Services** and **Teaching**, click **My Courses**.
3. Under **Courses I'm Teaching**, click the **Edit** button to the left of the course link you would like to change.
4. You now can set a Web page other than Blackboard: select **Other** and then type the Website/address (URL) for your course in the field provided.
5. Click **Save Changes**.

Blackboard FAQs

Why can't my students see my course site?

It may be that you have not made your course ***available*** to them. To make a Blackboard course available:

1. Under **Control Panel**, click the **Customization** button and the menu expands.
2. Click **Properties**,
3. On the **Properties** page that opens, under **Set Availability** (i.e., section 3), click **Yes**.
4. Click **Submit** to save the changes or click **Cancel** to quit.

See page 10 of this guide for an alternate method.

Note: If you have *not* made a course visible to your students, you will see the word **Enable** *before* the course name in the **My Courses** module located on the My Blackboard tab. However, it's always available to you as an instructor.

Will the final course grades I put in my Blackboard Grade Center show up on students' transcripts?

No, you must use WSU Pipeline to submit official final grades for your students.

How can I add a student to my Blackboard course site?

If a student has been registered for more than three business days and still is not in your Blackboard course, contact the Blackboard Support Team in C&IT at bbadmin@wayne.edu or (313) 577-9457.

Why do I get a Security Warning pop-up when I'm working in Blackboard?

This warning asks you to accept or trust a certificate from Design Science, Inc. that created the WebEQ portion of Blackboard's visual textbox editor. WebEQ is used to create mathematical & scientific symbols. You may safely accept or trust this certificate and run the Applet. If possible, click **Always trust content from this publisher**.

I'm ready to learn more about Blackboard; what are my next steps?

Contact the Technology Resource Center at (313) 577-1980. Also see the online resources on the next page.

For more Blackboard FAQs, visit the WSU Knowledgebase: Blackboard Section:

http://kb.wayne.edu/index.php?category=22

Get More Blackboard Information and Help

Online Resources Available 24x7

C&IT Blackboard Resources
http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard

Office for Teaching and Learning Blackboard Resources
http://www.otl.wayne.edu

Blackboard Inc. Support Website
(You must create your own account to use this non-WSU resource.)
https://support.blackboard.com/

WSU Technology Resource Center
http://www.trc.wayne.edu

Computing & Information Technology (C&IT) Website
http://computing.wayne.edu

Software Supported by the C&IT Help Desk
http://computing.wayne.edu/Help_Desk/software.php

WSU Knowledgebase: Blackboard Section
http://kb.wayne.edu/index.php?category=22

Still Have Questions?

Call the Blackboard Support Team at (313) 577-9457; 8 a.m.-6 p.m. weekdays
E-mail bbadmin@wayne.edu – Available: 24x7, response within two business days

Call the C&IT Help Desk at (313) 577-4778 or e-mail helpdesk@wayne.edu
Fall and Winter term hours: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. weekdays
Spring-Summer term hours: 8 a.m.–6 p.m. weekdays

Call the C&IT Help Desk VoiceMail at (313) 577-2115
– Available: 24x7, response within two business days

Ideas for Best Practice

Develop Your Course Site First, Then Make it Available to Students

You have full access to your Blackboard course site whether or not it's available to students. It's a good idea to develop your course site first (make any changes to the course menu content areas, add your course documents, and so on) before making the site available to your students.

Copy and Paste Text into the Visual Textbox Editor

If you have more than a couple sentences to enter into the VisualTextbox Editor in Blackboard, consider creating that text in a word-processing program, like Microsoft Word. Then you can copy the text and paste it into the Bb VisualTextbox Editor. In addition, this ensures that you have a back-up copy of your text on your computer's hard drive. You can format the text in the word processor or the Bb VisualTextbox Editor.

Content Area Availability

Make the content area available to students only *after* you have finished developing it — once all your folders and documents have been added or linked to in the content areas. Whenever new material is available, you might also send an e-mail to all students or post a Bb Announcement.

Disable the Grade Center Tool

The Blackboard Grade Center is a tool you can use to manage and post student grades. If you do not plan to post students' grades on your Blackboard course site, make the Grade Center tool unavailable.